



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0461NV-1 for Washoe County School District (WCSD)

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The authors of this proposal contextualize Nevada's current economic difficulties, including the highest unemployment and foreclosure rates in the nation. However, the proposal appears disjointed in that myriad programs focusing on various topics are offered as solutions to raising student achievement, but the overall program and its components are severely lacking a cohesive solution or small set of reforms that are attainable. Table 1 lists thirteen major reforms for the Washoe County School District. This proposal does not articulate a clear and systematic approach to reform nor how their list of solutions will deepen student learning.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	1
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>It is unclear of the precise methodology used to select the participating schools since the methodology used in the selection was not described except in a cursory manner. The proposal states that data analyses showed that there should be a greater focus on Pre-K-Gr. 3 and Grades 5-9. The proposal weakly mentions that a "critical examination of student data" was conducted; however the process used and the specific evaluative criteria applied were not described. A list of participating schools was provided.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district presented a "Theory of Change-Logic Model" in chart form and described the roles that Washoe County staff will assume to execute the roll out and scale up of their plan. It was incumbent upon the reader to piece together the rudiments of a plan from this lengthy discussion of the "Theory of Change-Logic Model." The gist is that the model defines building blocks in order to achieve the long-term goal of all students graduating college- and career ready by providing a path for the district's next steps centered on the four Core Educational Assurance areas.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Elaborate tables using a Theory of Change Logic Model were displayed to explain the district's goals to improve student performance, decrease achievement gaps, and increase graduation rates, college enrollment, and the attainment of a postsecondary degree. Many initiatives were described, and, if these initiatives were implemented may result in increased student performance, however, for many of the district's stated goals, insufficient evidence is presented to show a direct link between the needs, activities, and desired outcomes.</p>		

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal has presented and analyzed disaggregated data from the past four years to provide an accurate profile of</p>		

district strengths and needs. These data include graduation rates, ninth grade credit attainment, Advanced Placement Course completion, and gains on standardized tests. The data indicate clearly a record of academic success over the past four years. It is unclear whether data as reported in the proposal are made available to parents and students in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district is transparent in releasing the aforementioned information and has made this information accessible to the public on the district's website. This information is provided at the school level. Additionally, the district provides personnel salary information as requested.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district has described its autonomy within Nevada for implementing the Common Core State Standards, its award of a TIF grant to facilitate mandatory performance-based pay, the institution of a growth model for analyzing data from state-mandated examinations, and its focus on personalized learning. This section would have been strengthened if the text had been more closely linked to the stated criteria.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district provided local officials, mayors, Washoe School District staff, and the Nevada Department of Education with opportunities to review and offer meaningful comments on Washoe County's application for Race to the Top--District funds. Numerous comments were received and analyzed. Memoranda of Agreement for the Teacher Career Lattice and Pay for Performance were signed by pertinent parties and approved by the district school board. Little text was presented regarding how the proposal was revised as a result of stakeholder feedback.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

A comprehensive analysis of the district's plan for blended learning was provided. Especially noteworthy was WCSD's plan for personalized learning at the high school level, for which each student will be provided an adult mentor whose job is to build a relationship with the student, and help the student identify career interests, and barriers that might impede his/her goal to graduate from high school. In a district with the demographics of Washoe County this initiative will provide students with a successful role model to encourage them to graduate from high school and, perhaps, to seek higher education. Some additional information regarding the logic behind the specific reforms addressed would have further strengthened the response.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
Section (C)(1) outlines six steps that the district plans to follow to help prepare students for college and careers. Most notable among these initiatives is that Washoe County plans to increase its technology infrastructure, provide greater access to web-based tools, create a foundation for the district's data warehouse and an "Acceleration Zone" to give focused support to the lowest achieving schools. Page 29 describes the development of an Academic Personalized Plan and will create personalized learning recommendations and goals, but how this will take place is not clearly described. Additionally, a lengthy list of district programs is described, but how these programs will work together or fit into the plan is not sufficiently supported nor is the plan cohesive., which may hinder the successful execution of the plan and result in unclear goals and performance targets.		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	4

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(2) describes myriad programs, but no information is provided to articulate how these programs will work together or how they will be used in the district. There is a severe lack of systematic planning for the implementation of these many programs. Multiple disjointed approaches are presented and are not supported with specific details. No evidence is presented to substantiate how the personalized learning environments will link directly to college and career standards. Little evidence is provided regarding how the plan will be executed and supported.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	5
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Once again a lengthy list of Impact team members and their roles has been included, but a description of a practical, efficient, and comprehensive plan describing how these individuals will be used to support a cohesive plan is not evident. Myriad programs are described briefly, for example the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), but how this program will be used in classrooms to improve instruction is not addressed. The same comment applies to their proposed use of the Developmental Reading Assessment and the Edusoft system. How these programs will lead to the demonstration of student mastery is missing from this proposal</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	2
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>It is unclear whether a cohesive connection exists among the district's various programs. Evidence of a cohesive plan is missing. For example, "five pilot middle schools will receive RTT-D funding to purchase tablets..." Other than as stated "...for ensuring students' daily access to technology tools," no purpose for these tools is articulated in the plan. Other programs are described in this section, but a well-crafted plan for these initiatives and tools is not evident. No evidence is provided to support the fact that these classroom tools and programs will result in the successful implementation of the proposal.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district supports the public reporting of clear and transparent data. Data analysts will compile and analyze pertinent information and will travel throughout the district to gain a full understanding of the district's needs and constraints. Additionally, the district's Department of Accountability will work with schools to ensure that school personnel are using data correctly and effectively. As described, the Student Voice Toolkit provided to schools will be used to elicit buy-in from students by giving them a voice in their school experience. One strategy mentioned in this proposal is the use of data analysts to collect information about the program. How analyses of these data will impact the implementation of the program and the impact of teacher and educator performance was insufficiently addressed.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section presents a descriptive list of Washoe's communication strategy, which is transparent, practical, and multi-faceted. Each of the schools to be served is listed with pertinent demographic data.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's performance measures are comprehensive and useful to educators and district parents. For example, the district has stated earlier in the proposal that its teachers use multiple formative assessment tools to provide iterative data on student</p>		

performance on an ongoing basis. These data elements are captured as performance measures that are valuable to teachers to use to evaluate the effectiveness of their classroom instruction.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Washoe County presents a high-quality plan to evaluate its Race to the Top-District initiatives. An impressive addition to this plan is the county's initiative to increase its private foundation support, which will greatly strengthen the likelihood of successfully executing the plan in a supportive community environment.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The budget is presented in tables and narratives and the components had to be synthesized by the reader to glean a full understanding of the budget. Additionally, the budget does not appear to focus heavily on capacity building, which is critical for the long-term sustainability of the program once grant funds have been depleted.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: Even with shortfalls described in this section, the district has made progress toward meeting the goals delineated in its high-quality strategic plan. The district continues to have unprecedented growth in student achievement and the graduation rate. The proposal lists additional local initiatives that could lead to sustainability. Additional details about each of these initiatives and anticipated funding from these initiatives would have enhanced this section.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The applicant has clearly identified its competitive preference priorities and supported the need for these priorities and execution strategies throughout the proposal. For example, five of the districts "academies" will focus on STEM, partnering with local businesses and higher education entities in the Reno area. Washoe has identified nine priorities to grow and support the district. and has procured a wide array of partners to support these initiatives.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The applicant presented a cohesive plan to improve teaching and learning and addressed all components of the application. One of the strongest themes in the proposal was its focus on personalized learning environments and its positive effects on student motivation and performance. It is evident that the district intends to infuse personalized learning throughout the district.		

Total	210	115
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0461NV-2 for Washoe County School District (WCSD)

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly sets forth a comprehensive and coherent vision of reform which address the RTT's four Core Educational Assurances through four key District reforms which include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Accountability Framework with a primary focus of identifying system strengths and weaknesses so action leading to the success of students and their schools can be taken; 2) Teaching and Learning Framework that outlines the most essential components of teaching and learning and provides goal "pathways"; 3) Teacher and Principal Professional Growth Systems that offer a comprehensive system of professional growth, support, and evaluation in order to ensure that highly effective teacher and leaders are in the schools; and 4) Multi-Tiered Systems of support which provide for students' individual academic social and emotional needs. <p>Special foci will be on lowest-achieving schools, Pre-K-3rd and 5th through 9th grades, and student sub-populations which include ELL, Gifted, and Special Education.</p> <p>Since Washoe County School District is a unified K-12 district, and concentrated efforts are placed on Pre-K-3, and 5th through 9th grades, based on current achievement data, unanticipated problems may surface with achievement in grade 4 and high school within the next four years if these grade levels are unattended.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has identified all of the 101 district's schools to participate in this project. Based on the information submitted in Appendix E, specifically low-income information, it is difficult to ascertain if each of these schools meet the criteria established by the district: lowest-achieving schools, Pre-K-3rd and 5th and 9th grades, and student sub-populations which include ELL, Gifted, and Special Education, providing additional information regarding the district's selection criteria within the narrative would be beneficial. According to Table 2: Eligibility Requirements, the select schools meet the competition's eligibility requirements based on the 40% poverty pre-requisite.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant includes a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change by including the Theory of Change Logic Model which outlines the manner by which the district will build and expand on the Core Educational Assurances and translate into meaningful reform to support district-wide change. The RTT-D initiative will be overseen by a Deputy Superintendent and Chief of Staff who will in turn oversee five</p>		

departments and a variety of staff whose sole responsibility will be the success of this project's implementation.

The applicant proposes intentional, differentiated professional development to all WCSD schools, including charter schools to ensure that teachers and principals have the training and capacity to continue in their reform efforts once the grant funds have been expended.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides compelling evidence that the district's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity. The project's goals include extensive lists of the district's Need and Gaps. These "Needs" are analyzed to include corresponding Objectives, Activities, Responsible Parties, Anticipated Outcomes, Measures and Data Sources, Timelines and Funding Sources.

Schools will use the Student Monitoring Tool and Data Warehouse Dashboards as interim and leading indicator data. These data tools will contain MAP, DRA, credit attainment information, attendance, and other information which is geared to provide frequent updates regarding student achievement and progress. Additionally, embedded formative assessment information, a part of the College /Career Ready component of the Core Assurances, will ensure that all classroom educators have the capacity to analyze successful classroom content and to make modifications as needed.

The WCSD will use the Student Growth Percentile model developed by Damian Betebenner to measure and link student growth to teacher and principal evaluations. This model can also be used to calculate an Adequate Growth Percentile (AGP) model. The AGP represents how much growth each student needs to make each year in order to become proficient within 3 years or by the 8th grade. The model also represents how much growth a student needs to maintain proficiency and to move up to college readiness.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	14

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence of a clear record of success through charts and graphs demonstrating increases in cohort graduation rates, 9th grade credit attainment, and AP course completion. Additional information regarding 3-8th grade standardized test scores demonstrates increases in student achievement in Reading and Math for grades 3-8 for all students and student subgroups.

The district acknowledged persistently low achieving schools by implementing research-based systems and strategies shown to increase student achievement in Turnaround Schools. These initiatives included extended learning time, teacher collaboration opportunities, revised discipline policies, student academies, and revitalized classroom technology.

The district has piloted an Academic Personalized Plan (APP) for students and parents where individualized "Dashboards", including state and local assessments, family engagement, discipline, attendance, course success, and credit attainment information is readily available. This information is connected to a Data Warehouse which is accessible to students in the event that a student changes schools. Quarterly progress reports provide an early warning system for students who may be at risk. For schools using the APP, students are held accountable for their goals as a part of a student accountability initiative.

The applicant provided examples of transparent communication which include:

1. Communication between schools and District leadership such as school profiles, and scorecards that trend data on key performance indicators.
2. The Infinite Campus Parent Portal is an online student information system that provides information on students' credit attainment, grades, and assessment data.
3. Parent University conducts classes to teach parents how to access student data.
4. Academic Parent Teacher Teams review class and individual student performance data, parent-student goal-setting, and modeling of teaching/learning practices parents can do at home.

In regard to reporting Reading and Math achievement for grades 3-8, instead of graphs depicting increases or decreases in

specific scores, actual achievement results by grade, by subject, by subgroup would be beneficial in an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in each subject and subgroup.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)

5

2

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant reports that Human Resources reports certified personnel salary information to the NV Department of Education annually, and to Educational Research Services annually. Job titles and salaries are posted on the WCSD website. Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional and support staff as well as actual school-level expenditures are not published for public consumption.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

10

9

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

WCSD has demonstrated evidence of successful and sufficient autonomy under State regulatory requirements in its ability to implement personalized learning environments. Based on the State of Nevada's mandates, WCSD has begun implementation of the CCSS and the College and Career Readiness Standards. NRS 386.650 mandates the use of performance data as a part of the teacher and principal evaluation system. TIF grants have allowed the WCSD to develop a rigorous and defensible evaluation system, which is in the process of implementation. Nevada statutes require the measurement of the longitudinal progress of student achievement. The WCSD has begun working with the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) Method developed by Betebenner, and used by 14 states in their reporting of student growth.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

6

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes that the District demonstrated meaningful engagement in the development of the proposal and elicited the support of stakeholders for the proposal through planning meetings and surveys. In September 2012, a two day workshop was convened with the directors and coordinators of each of the Central Office departments to generate a list of key objectives and activities to incorporate into the Race to the Top Grant which aligned to the four core assurances. A subsequent staff and parent survey consisting of multiple choice questions and open-ended responses was made available via email. Surveys were translated into Spanish to ensure a wide range of response from all constituents. A total of 1,335 surveys (792 parent and 533 staff) were collected. Responses were tabulated and reported.

It appears that the primary method of survey dissemination was email. Based on the degree of poverty reported in the application, it is difficult to ascertain the percentage of parents who had access to email. The means by which perspective participants were advised of their opportunity to participate is also unknown. The applicant describes that the responses were counted and reported, but it is difficult to ascertain the degree of impact these recommendations had upon the grant application. No additional engagement activities for parents and community were reported.

Collective bargaining, as reported by the applicant, primarily entailed staffing and Teacher Career Ladder and Pay for Performance agreements. The application was signed by the President of the local teachers' union or association.

Forty-four Letters of Support from a variety of stakeholders were submitted with this application. Additionally, Sparks and Reno city Mayors submitted Resolutions in support of the application.

It appears that stakeholders were provided with a Letter of Support template to assist in the submission process. While this may be an acceptable practice, templates require only a signature, and tend to discourage genuine, well-written discourse that expresses stakeholders' understanding of and support for the tasks to be undertaken.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrated evidence of the District's current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind the reform proposal contained within the application. The project's goals include extensive lists of the district's Need and Gaps. The response to the "logic" behind the reform proposal is in the way of "Needs" which are analyzed and include corresponding Objectives, Activities, Responsible Parties, Anticipated Outcomes, Measures and Data Sources, Timelines and Funding Sources.

In an attempt to overcome identified gaps in achievement, the district will fund a Program Evaluator to work with Departments of School Performance and Accountability to conduct archival data analysis and data collection and compare this information

with consistent patterns and practices evident across the 11 model district schools. The district has also implemented blended learning environments, personalized learning environments, adult mentors, project learning, interventions and enrichment activities and student voice engagement.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	19
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides an exceptional, high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching through personalized learning environments in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The district currently engages in innovative and best practices at all grade levels for all students that engage and empower all learners, in particular high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner. This proposal's "next steps" specifically targets the district's most at-risk students: ELL, Gifted and Talented, SpEd, and grade spans PreK- and 5-9.</p> <p>The applicant provides a compelling narrative which describes an all-inclusive menu of strategies aimed at providing academic, social and emotional support for all students, but especially for those populations identified as at risk. These strategies include: Academic Personalized Plans, differentiated instruction, Project-based Learning, 21st Century Learning Environments, flexible scheduling, and technology.</p> <p>Parents are engaged in this engagement process to ensure that students are held accountable for their learning. Building upon the pilot Academic Parent Teacher Teams, in partnership with Harvard Family Research Project, training is provided which allows extended time for parents and teachers to review class and individual student performance data, parent-student academic goal setting, and modeling of teaching and learning practices parents can do at home.</p> <p>The college and career readiness process begins PreK through screenings, childcare, full-day kindergarten and a P-3 Model based on a Reggio Emilia inspired classroom that provides children with daily experiences that promote language, academic learning and social skills.</p> <p>Another critical grade span is 5th -9th which encompasses transitions from elementary to middle and then to high school. Under this proposal, discussions with students on college and career readiness will begin as early as the 5th grade, be recorded in an Academic Personalized Plan and facilitate academic placement options.</p> <p>Personalized Learning Environments include an Academic Personalized Plan that addresses every student's needs individually: academic, career/college, social and emotional learning, wrap-around and family engagement services. The district considers the APP as central to helping students understand what they need to be college-and career ready upon graduation. Students are mentored and student-driven learning environments are created based on students' goals and interests. Through the help of school counselors, students participate in guided career explorations, community-based learning and applied learning activities to assist them in their decision-making. Signature Academies in all high schools, and select elementary and middle schools give students the opportunity to explore and plan for college and career.</p> <p>WCSD students have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning through Two-Way Immersion Programs, which include native English speakers and speakers of another language and Signature Academies, which provide students with opportunities to acquire knowledge and expertise in arts, dance, environmental studies, world cultures, STEM, and CTE.</p> <p>WCSD students have the unique opportunity to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving through their Personal Learning Environments which foster pedagogical practices that use individual students' informal learning, in and out of school, to inform experiences that can be used in school. 21st Century Learning Environments foster and promote communication collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. These environments include Project-Based Learning, Understanding by Design models, bended learning models, and technology integration initiatives.</p> <p>The WCSD is making data more accessible to all stakeholders through both digital and paper formats in multiple languages. Various platforms such as APPS, Scorecards, and Dashboards student, school and district performance information is gathered and reported. The WCSD Accountability Framework system provides user-friendly tools for principals, teachers and support staff to support improvement planning and monitoring throughout the year.</p> <p>The district is reviewing its current structures in the areas of ELL, Gifted and Special Education to improve outcomes for</p>		

students in these subpopulations. Specific accommodations are being implemented which include development of formative assessments, peer tutors, accommodations, modifications, challenging learning environments, extended learning time, differentiated learning opportunities, and credit recovery programs.

RTT-D funding will allow WCSD to employ Social Workers to work in collaboration with school staff, specialized teachers, counselors and principals to better address the needs of the “whole student”. Advisory periods will provide opportunities for students to review their APP, and to participate in lessons designed to increase college and career awareness.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	20
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents an exceptional, high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching. Professional development for both teachers and principals, through the use of a train the trainer model and online learning websites, support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student’s academic needs and help ensure that all students can graduate on time, college and career ready.

The 21st Century Learning model incorporates many individualized learning strategies, such as Project-Based Learning, Cooperative Learning and critical thinking. Technology, in the way of personal learning software and hardware devices, will provide a model for the district to close the digital divide and address the individuality of students. Through the 21st Century Academy for Teacher Leaders, an extensive databank will be developed as an instructional resource for best teaching practices, exemplary lesson plans and curricular resources.

WCSD district –level academic assessments, credit accrual data and advanced coursework participation and completion (all of which inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators) are reported to students, parents and community via online resources.

An enhanced teacher and principal evaluation system provides opportunities for continuous improvement and recognizes the individual’s strengths and weaknesses. All principals district-wide are participating in ongoing training in observation, evidence collection, rating calibration, pre-and post observation conferencing and summative report writing.

WCSD’s Accountability Framework measures both student growth and proficiency. As a part of this system, a “next generation” assessment management system is needed that is customizable, robust, user-friendly, aligned to a CCSS item bank, provides a 2nd -12th grade test design capability and functions as a reporting vehicle for students, classrooms, schools and district personnel.

Professional development will concentrate on four key areas: APPs and PLEs, 21st Century Learning skills and technology, instructional strategies especially designed for subpopulations, and data analysis. It is anticipated that RTT-D funds will be used to provide coaches, training coordinators, and IT support curriculum specialists to assist with these endeavors.

WCSD has a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including those in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas. “Hiring for Attitude”, an innovative selection process, which assesses a candidate’s core beliefs: a passion for teaching, persistence, student advocacy, a belief that all students can learn and be successful, student engagement and relationship building, cultural awareness, and responsiveness in the classroom, is being implemented district-wide. An Equitable Distribution of Teachers Plan is geared to help close the gap between experience and High Poverty/ High Minority Schools related to the number of core classes being taught by experienced teachers.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided substantial evidence that the District has a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure. Because of the size of the district, governance of the Washoe County School District requires that the whole be divided into its parts in order that support and services be equitably provided to all

participating schools. Four area Superintendents oversee each of four Performance Zones. Four Performance Directors coordinate the work of cross-functional teams of specialists who, along with principals, review student data and align resources to impact student performance results. Each Zone has a team of Implementation Specialists who provide professional development, support teachers in PLCs and provide coaching support to teachers. Schools with 1-2 star designations form an “Acceleration Zone” with focused support drawing from Impact Team members who provide support in best practices and innovations from the district's 4-5 star designation schools.

School leadership teams in participating schools are provided with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules, calendars and the school curriculum. Schedule decisions relate to teacher collaboration and professional development. Calendars, can be traditional versus balanced (intersessions) to allow for remediation and credit recovery. Another site-based decision involves the school’s curriculum as it relates to the development and implementation of its School Improvement Plan.

Students are given the opportunity to progress and earn credits based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic, through Extended Learning Time (ELT) and Personalized Learning Environment (PLE) opportunities. The district’s A+ program maintains a mastery-based approach which does not restrict students’ learning to a specific timeline. The WOLF program, which utilizes Pearson’s Connections Learning platform, provides access to a full virtual school environment for K-12 students, and allows students to progress at their own pace through engaging lessons that are aligned with the Common Core. Additionally, the Washoe Adult High School serves more than 2,000 non-traditional students yearly with its mastery-based approach to education.

On-line assessment systems, such as MAP, DRA, AIMSweb and Edusoft (primarily use as formative assessments), give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. Summative assessments are administered at the close of the school year and are mandated by the Nevada Department of Education.

Through strategies such as differentiation, intercultural communication, utilization of appropriate co-teaching models and responsible scheduling of instructional resources, the WCSD provides learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides compelling evidence that the District and school infrastructure supports personalized learning through technological innovations. Through the web-based platform, Schoolwires, the district ensures that all participating students, parents, and educators have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school. Schoolwires is available 24/7/365 and allows for the extension of the learning day through the following: giving teachers a place to post work and relevant study materials that are accessible to all students; providing a platform for two-way collaboration between parent and teacher; and providing an avenue for students to collaborate with other students in a safe and secure online environment. WCSD schools presently provide students with access to technology devices used as personal learning devices in order to access its on-line tools. Considerations of such factors as school demographics, and individual school's priorities will influence decisions regarding future technological advances. Technical support for Schoolwires is provided through tutorials, white papers, online videos, and phone support. The WCSD's Data Warehouse is a central repository of student achievement information which is accessible to parents and school and district personnel in real time, and allows interested stakeholders the opportunity to get a clear picture of where every student stands academically at any given time. A Data Reporting Analyst will be hired through RTT-D funding to ensure that all educators have access to and can utilize user friendly data displays using data contained in the warehouse. In addition to individual student information, the Data Warehouse incorporates all data sources currently used by the District including: financial and HR records; Nutrition Services; Transportation; IT Help Desk; assessment data; discipline; Special Education records; and ELL information.		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

The applicant provides comprehensive strategies for implementing a rigorous and continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities. In order to fulfill the grant requirements for program evaluation and continuous improvement, project evaluators will be responsible for triangulating various data sources. These sources include: District academic data, surveys, teacher and principal evaluation rubrics, Student Voice Toolkits, and 21st Century Learning assessments,. Each will be reviewed and analyzed in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to improve each strategy implemented. Project evaluators will report directly to the Director of Accountability, Research and Evaluation. Additionally, data analysts will be hired to compile all performance and other relevant measures for both PreK-3rd and 5th through 9th grades. Social and emotional factors will be included. This information will be communicated to RTT-D leadership and schools.

Throughout the RTT-D grant cycle, an Internal Evaluation Team will communicate regularly with project staff and leadership, so that information from the evaluation can be used to make program adjustments and improvements as necessary. Formative evaluations will be shared with School Improvement Teams and leaders. Semi-annual evaluations and progress toward goal implementation will be shared through large stakeholder meetings. An annual report, which will contain formative evaluation descriptions and summaries as well as progress on evaluation benchmarks will be created in years one and two. Outcome information will be included in the annual report beginning in year three. Students' perceptions will be gathered through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, and will be considered for program improvement.

Whereas, the applicant provides comprehensive strategies for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during the four year grant process, the applicant does not address strategies it will undertake to continue feedback to constituents after the term of the grant.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a detailed description of effective strategies which the district will employ to communicate progress and ensure support of this grant proposal. In addition to numerous internal and external communication strategies, WCSD holds an annual Data Summit to comprehensively review academic outcomes, evaluate District progress, and determine how this information will be used for District improvement. These events promote a culture of data use in the District and schools.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)

5

4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided extensive tables identifying key performance, by age span, that will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information about progress on implementation of the RTT-D grant. The student performance component includes growth measures based on the Student Growth Percentile Model (Betebenner 2008), which normalizes student growth and performance and compares growth within similar scoring academic peer groups.

For PreK, the applicant described the data source and measurement/rational for selection as: "The proportion of students scoring at the proficient level on the Ages and Stages Literacy Inventory". At this point, no Pre-K data is available for the purposes of this report.

WCSD is currently validating its current teacher and youth self-report measures of social and emotional skill, dispositions, and behaviors to ensure that they have both structural and content validity. Through a strong partnership with Collaborative for Academic and Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), WCSD will have a strong system of social emotional indicators at every grade level along the pathway from Pre-K to 12th grade.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes the formative and summative phases of the evaluation process. During years 1 and 2 (formative), the evaluation will focus on program level implementation issues such as professional development participation, integrity of implementation, challenges and promising strategies. This phase of the evaluation will focus measures on fidelity of implementation to assess progress toward outcomes and to allow for modifications as needed. The summative portion of the evaluation (years 3-4) will focus on measuring the overall impact of RTT-D across District on the performance indicators which include: teacher and principal effectiveness, students' on-track academic indicators, students' college and career readiness indicators, and students' social and emotional competency indicators.

The applicant does not; however, adequately describe an evaluation of the effectiveness of funded activities, such as

professional development and technology use and their impact on academic achievement in the priority areas of this grant proposal.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided a comprehensive, overall budget and has in turn broken the overall budget into budgets for eight projects identified in the proposal. Narratives are provided for each. Considering the number of schools being served by this proposal, and the ambitious goals and objectives identified in this proposal, the budget, overall, appears to be reasonable.</p> <p>A re-purposing of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff in the areas of ELL, Gifted, and Special Education will allow for continued support of all teachers in that deployment of these FTEs into regular classrooms on a consistent basis will supplement existing staffing allocations. Investment in technology infrastructure will allow the District to sustain the technology needed to continue programs and initiatives.</p> <p>With the exception of professional development entailing travel, the applicant has not specifically put a cost to general professional development offerings.</p> <p>The costs for travel to the University of Virginia in years 2 and 3 for training of principals to develop leadership appears to be excessive. Additionally, an annual contractual cost per school of \$77,000 for leadership training appears costly especially since specific details about what this training entails appears to be lacking in this proposal.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant by providing numerous funding sources which will be leveraged to support the RTT-D initiative after funding has been completed. Additional grant funds will be solicited. Title I and II, and the General Fund will continue training and professional development for teachers and principals in instructional best practices for intervention and enrichment programs, 21st Century Learning, SpEd and ELL. The Train the Trainer model will further that opportunity and provide training in the use of student APPs. FTEs will be re-allocated. However, the applicant's plan could provide more specificity with timelines extending post grant activities and expenditures and budget narratives supporting these expenditures.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides compelling evidence of need including 2011-12 free and reduced lunch eligibility, economic status, and per pupil educational funding for its response to the Race to the Top- District Competitive Preference Priority.</p> <p>Collaborative partners in this endeavor include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nevada State Pre-K Program whose partners include The Children's Cabinet Child Care Subsidy System, Nevada State Welfare Child Care Quality Division, Community Chest, Nevada Pre-K Standards Program, Nevada Registry, UNR Child and Family Research Center, Early Head Start, CSA Head Start • 21st Century Community Learning Centers with federal funding for 23 after school centers • Academies at each of its seven School Improvement Grant Schools • Parent University, offering free classes at schools and other community locations for families, and taught in collaboration with more than 20 community partners. • Family Resource Centers which provide basic needs and care management to struggling families to become stabilized and develop self-sufficiency. • Social and Emotional Learning initiatives, receiving both planning and implementation grants from the NoVo Foundation, 		

the District partners with the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning to enhance five core areas of social and emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

- Re-Engagement Centers, strategically placed throughout the highest poverty areas of Washoe County, assist "vanished" middle and high school students.
- Dropout Prevention, with strong partnerships with County Social Services and Juvenile Services to provide services for youth, especially those in foster care, are homeless, and adjudicated youth, to decrease dropout rates.

Table 6: Population-Level Desired Results for Students include PreK children Kindergarten, PreK-3rd grade, 3rd grade, 5th - 9th grade students, parents, all participating families, and all participating students.

By providing user-friendly data tools to schools to ensure the effective monitoring of academic progress of students at individual, classroom, and school levels throughout the year, the District uses data to target resources to improve results for all students including ELLs, Gifted, economically disadvantaged, and Special Education.

Sustainability will be accomplished through continued work with partnering agencies, by building a Train the Trainer model, sharing best practices with stakeholders and other Nevada districts, and through participation in forums at the state and national levels.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly sets forth a comprehensive and coherent vision of reform which addresses the RTT's four Core Educational Assurances with special foci on the District's lowest-achieving schools, Pre-K-3rd and 5th through 9th grades, and student sub-populations which include ELL, Gifted, and Special Education. Strategies which address core areas include:

- 1) Accountability Framework with a primary focus of identifying system strengths and weaknesses so action leading to the success of students and their schools can be taken;
- 2) Teaching and Learning Framework that outlines the most essential components of teaching and learning and provides goal "pathways";
- 3) Teacher and Principal Professional Growth Systems that offer a comprehensive system of professional growth, support, and evaluation in order to ensure that highly effective teacher and leaders are in the schools; and
- 4) Multi-Tiered Systems of support which provide for students' individual academic social and emotional needs.

Total	210	182
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0461NV-3 for Washoe County School District (WCSD)

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application narrative effectively describes a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on a tremendous amount of work already being done in the district. The application demonstrates that the district has been moving intentionally and ambitiously down this reform path for the past few years. The narrative further provides a description of how the district has leveraged other funds to lay the foundation for this work, which speaks well to its ability to sustain the effort beyond the life of the grant. Examples of this include the Teacher and Principal Professional Growth System built with Teacher Incentive Fund grants; adoption of the Multi-Tiered System of Support in collaboration with CASEL and with support of the NoVo Foundation; and the implementation of STEM Academies using School Improvement Grant funds. Due to its significant efforts, the narrative notes that the district was awarded the CUBE award by the National School Boards Association in 2012. This award is given to only one school district in the nation for increasing student outcomes, including the graduation rate, and closing achievement gaps.</p> <p>The four key district reforms detailed in the grant application are 1) Accountability Framework; 2) Teaching and Learning Framework; 3) Teacher and Principal Professional Growth System; and 4) Multi-Tiered Systems of Support. The narrative also clearly details strategies to achieve these four reforms that will lead to achieving the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support. These strategies include improving the Academic Personalized Plans; building learning systems specifically to support special needs populations; moving to teachers and leaders as facilitators; increasing extended learning time and professional learning community time; increasing technology infrastructure; and creating an Acceleration Zone to focus on the schools most in need of improvement.</p> <p>In sum, the applicant's narrative articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision is very strong, clear, and thorough.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides no narrative discussing its process for selecting the schools to participate. The application narrative makes clear how the district chose the grade spans of PreK-3 and 5th -9th grade using data focused particularly on achievement gaps, but not how it chose participating schools. Further, there is no discussion of a process to ensure that the participating schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements.</p> <p>The list of participating schools and total number of participating students are included in the application, but no summation of collective eligibility.</p> <p>Slightly better than 2/3 of the requested information is present in the response; thus, the response scores in the upper middle range.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application clearly delineates the district's comprehensive and thoughtful Theory of Change and the strategies chosen to bring about the desired change in outcomes. The plan for implementation is strategic and intentional, providing differentiated professional development and technology to the school zones of greatest need first and building capacity to ensure sustainability of the effort and well as district-wide scale-up over time, though the narrative provides insufficient detail on the scale-up timeline. The accountability and leadership structure of the district is detailed and is appropriately designed to ensure the effective implementation of the district's proposed reform efforts.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application's detailed presentations of the district's Theory of Change and its annual goals are clear and coherent, presenting needs and gaps; objectives; activities; responsible parties/partners; outcomes; measures; and funding sources for</p>		

each goal that is directly tied back to the Theory of Change. It is noted that letters of support are present from the various parties and partners responsible for various aspects of the district's reform plan. The applicant's vision for reform is highly likely to improve student learning and performance as well as make progress on closing gaps in achievement for various groups.

Data regarding performance and goals on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth) is provided in a concise format with clear definitions as are data and goals surrounding closing the achievement gap, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates. In all cases, the targets are ambitious yet appear achievable given the details of the district's plan for implementation of reform.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The application narrative describes district success in advancing student learning and in closing some achievement gaps over the past four years due to its work with the district's strategic plan, its new Accountability Framework, and other district initiatives upon which the Race to the Top proposal will build. Of particular note is the tremendous increase in both the aggregate and several subgroups in the four-year graduation rate. Additionally, the district has made great gains in both the aggregate and in every subgroup in the percentage of 9th graders on-track to graduate based on their level of credit attainment. The narrative does not provide the raw student performance data on state assessments, but the chart provided does highlight areas of improvement in performance and in closing the achievement gap.</p> <p>The narrative details the district's efforts to achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its seven persistently lowest-achieving schools using extended learning time, increased teacher collaboration to unify and differentiate instruction aligned to the Common Core, a focus on MTSS to decrease behavior issues, project-based learning, and increased technology. The degree to which these reform efforts have made changes in these particularly schools is not discussed.</p> <p>The application narrative describes the district's effort to make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services by using the Academic Personalized Plan and a pilot project with an aligned individualized "dashboard" that gives parents and students real-time access to student data to include assessment data, parent engagement, attendance, discipline, course success, and credit attainment. The district's plan is to strengthen the data warehouse and refine the APP to enable district-wide access to and use of these tools. The district is also working to expand and refine its early warning system designed to keep students on-track to graduate. Where the APP system is currently used, students are engaged in the process of goal-setting and course-planning based on their individual interests and needs. The narrative describes the district's current status in how data is made available to educators and to parents as well. The district's Parent University also conducts classes for parents in how to access and interpret the data available to them.</p> <p>Overall, it is clear from the narrative that the district makes data availability and use priorities for all stakeholders with a particular emphasis on low-achieving schools.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The application describes the extent to which the district makes available the requested information regarding personnel salaries. The narrative provides links to Web sites where the district posts information (such as personnel salaries by position title) that would allow one to search for elements of the required information. No information is provided for how one would access information on non-personnel expenditures. From the narrative, it does not appear that the district makes available salary and other expenditure information by specific school.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:		

The narrative provides ample evidence in the form of statute and regulations showing state support for many of the concepts and strategies included in the district's reform proposal such as adoption of rigorous college and career ready standards, a requirement for the use of student performance data in educator evaluations, and the requirement for performance-based pay, providing sufficient support that successful conditions exist in the state for to implement the personalized learning environments described in the reform proposal. However, the narrative provides no discussion of any, let alone sufficient, autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to do so..

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative provides an adequate description of how parents and teachers were engaged in the development of the proposal through various means and how the development of the proposal was guided by their feedback. Both face-to-face meetings and electronic surveys were employed to engage stakeholders and collect their feedback. Once the proposal was developed, a draft was provided to various stakeholder groups for additional comment.

As it relates to collective bargaining unit support, the narrative contains the qualifying statement that nothing in the application supersedes the collective bargaining agreement. However, as the narrative goes on to delineate reform areas in which the bargaining units and district have signed agreements, such as on the Teacher Career Lattice and Pay For Performance projects, the application provides evidence of a strong working relationship between the district and its bargaining units.

Letters of support included in the application are from key stakeholders included as partners throughout the application as well as from key leaders in the state and city who can affect policy. There are also letters from parent organizations, early learning programs, businesses, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative provides a detailed plan for a needs assessment and gap analysis, including objectives, activities, responsible parties, and timelines. The analysis will include a concerted effort to include the student voice, develop a compendium of best practices, assess the needs related to stakeholder data access, determine the effectiveness of specific interventions, and conduct an evaluation of each personalized learning environment. The plan includes hiring a Program Evaluator with RTT-D funds to conduct archival data analysis to identify consistent patterns and practices that have proven to be effective and replicate them.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative describes how the Academic Personalized Plan is and will be the vehicle by which students guide and understand their learning with the support and input of parents and educators. A particular strength of the plan is that discussions will begin as early as 5th grade on a student's college and career goals. The APP will also allow students and parents to measure progress toward goals for SEL, college/career readiness, and family engagement and help the student have personal accountability in making determinations about necessary adjustments to the plan based on data. The plan also includes social worker support for families who may need additional wrap-around services.

The plan further details additional strategies to ensure deep learning in areas of student academic interest such as blending learning with flexible staff scheduling; teachers serving as facilitators of student learning to increase student ownership and accountability; and increasing the capacity of students to review and understand their own data. The plan also provides for support for special populations like ELL, gifted, and special education, to ensure that their unique needs are met as well. As is appropriate for older grades (5-9) the plan discusses how students will be involved in guided career explorations, community-based learning, and applied learning opportunities so that they can make more personal connections to their course of study.

The plan wisely acknowledges that students must have a firm grounding in 21st century skills like communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking in order to effect truly deep learning using the technology tools provided for in the plan, so it sets forth a plan to provide students with training in these areas. The narrative also details support for teachers in this area using an embedded coaching model. The narrative does not provide an adequate discussion of how students will have access and exposure to diverse cultures and experiences.

A significant strength of the plan likely to lead to a deepening of both student and teacher learning is that the plan calls for teachers to participate in research projects, a process which has historically led to the development of innovative educational experiences for students.

The narrative's discussion around access to high-quality digital content is insufficient to ensure that students will have this access. The narrative cites ever-evolving technology, compatibility concerns, and school autonomy and does not provide evidence of a plan to acquire high-quality content, digital or otherwise.

The application narrative provides details on the district's ongoing and regular feedback to students, parents, and the community via the APP's, Scorecards, the Dashboard (currently in pilot status), and other data tools for school performance as outlined in the district's Accountability Framework that are available to educators and provide a wealth of detailed information.

The plan describes the plan for the addition of APP coordinators and social workers to focus on maximizing the APP tool and providing students with the individual supports necessary to ensure their success. The plan appropriately also calls for the assigning of individual school-based adult mentors for each student to shepherd them through the APP process. Professional development for these mentors is, appropriately, part of the plan. Through these mentors and engagement with parents, students will receive the level of guidance they need to make individual learning recommendations collaboratively.

In terms of ensuring accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards, the application narrative demonstrates that the district has a high-level of understanding of and commitment to high needs students in numerous ways. First, the plan commits to a thorough analysis of the use of FTE to ensure that the students with the highest needs receive the services they need. Second, the plan details the district's essential move to tracking individual student growth, which is necessary to ensure the growth and academic movement students of all abilities. Third, the plan discusses the use of specific formative assessments for ELL students, the development of additional strategies for classroom teachers to meet the individual needs of high-needs students, and increased extended learning time in the school demonstrating the highest need. In addition, the district is moving to a year-round calendar and plans to use RTT-D funds to provide intervention and enrichment services during school breaks to further meet the needs of special populations.

The application details supports that will be available to students in the form of social workers and advisors, but the narrative does not adequately discuss mechanisms planned to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

Overall, the response is very strong, thorough, and thoughtful.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative presents a thoughtful and targeted plan for district professional development and training for educators. Four principles guide the district's professional development: 1) a focus on understanding and being able to use/teach the APP; 2) use of 21st century learning to engage students; 3) strategies for general education teachers to meet the needs of special populations; and 4) data analysis. These principles are aligned with and will effectively support the district's reform proposal and will support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs and ensure they graduate on time, college and career ready.

The application narrative discusses the district's plan for training and resources for educators to enable them to adapt content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks in response to their academic interest and needs. The primary vehicle for teacher resources will be the district's 21st Century Academy for Teacher Leaders, an online databank of teacher tools and resources. The plan also calls for administration and ongoing support for this dynamic tool.

The district describes in its application narrative its plans and tools for frequently measuring student progress in a variety of areas using a variety of tools and reporting mechanisms for the purpose of improving student outcomes. The narrative discussion is insufficient in its explanation for how these tools will also be used to improve the individual and collective practice

of educators.

The district will seek to Improve teacher and principal effectiveness using its evaluation system, particularly in the area of professional development. Principals will receive training in Observation and Analysis of Teaching (OAT) to support them in making the best possible use of the teacher evaluation system and data. Specific training is also provided in observation, data collection, and recognizing effective and highly effective teaching practices.

The district's plans for its assessment system, management of that system, and professional development around that system is comprehensive and will provide educators with timely information that will help them meet the individual student academic needs and interests.

The narrative provides only a cursory plan for the acquisition of digital core curriculum, but neither the plan nor process is fully developed.

The process and tool identified in the narrative to match student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs is the APP. The narrative also describes that each performance zone will have the services of an APP Coordinator to ensure the effective use of this tool.

The narrative is insufficient in its discussion of how all school leaders and leadership teams will have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment. The narrative briefly mentions the district's PGS's as a structure for professional learning using the evaluation system, but does not provide adequate detail for how these PGS's will ensure that individual student academic needs are met.

This section of the narrative provides an exhaustive description of the various forms and systems of professional development for educators in the district. Specific to leaders and leadership teams, the plan explains numerous opportunities for leaders to hone their skills for the purpose of continuously improving school and individual student progress.

The district's plan for ensuring that the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, particularly in hard-to-staff schools, is thorough and includes changes in hiring practice, particularly for turnaround schools, that are focused on behaviors and "Hiring for Attitude." New interview and hiring practices, combined with the intense professional development proposed, punctuated by a new evaluation system, will make great strides in ensuring that students are taught by highly effective teachers and principals.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative describes the district's organizational structure with an emphasis on how the central office is focused on providing support to schools through the district's differentiated performance zones, including alternative and charter schools. The narrative describes strong structured supervision and alignment of resources using appropriate spans of control to ensure the full implementation of the district's reform proposal. Additional supports, supervision, and accountability are organized around the Acceleration Zone for the lowest-performing schools.

The narrative describes the level of autonomy held at the school-level, which is minimal, but should still allow for the success of the district's reform model due to changes at the district and state level. Though principals do not have control over school schedules, they do have control over the content of professional development during early-release Wednesdays. The calendar is also set at the district level but has been revised to allow for additional intervention support during longer break times. Though standards and curriculum are set, the school does employ the Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool Kit to enable it to focus on its priority needs. The narrative does not discuss methods for staffing, assigning roles and responsibilities, or school-level budgeting, so it is not possible to assess the appropriateness of site-level autonomy in these areas.

The application narrative adequately describes several programs and processes designed to allow students to deepen their learning and proceed with that learning at their own pace. The Extended Learning Time Opportunities and Personalized Learning Environments, combined with the A + and WOLF programs, use varied instructional methods and processes to ensure that students receive the content and instruction they need and allow for personal inquiry. The A+ program maintains a mastery-based approach, which does not restrict students' learning to a specific timeline or amount of seat time. The WOLF

program provides a virtual environment with content aligned to the Common Core standards that students can access and move through at their own pace.

Whereas the narrative describes multiple assessment systems that are designed to determine student progress in mastering standards, it does not provide sufficient detail about how instructors and students will use this assessment information to move student learning along once mastery has been demonstrated.

In terms of providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, the narrative appropriately focuses on the critical importance of professional development to provide differentiated instruction, collaboration with specialty teachers, and access for students to the curriculum and instruction necessary to meet their unique needs whether they are ELL, gifted, or students with disabilities.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative highlights the district's planned use of the Schoolwires system that will give all participating students 24/7/365 access to online content and collaborative learning tools. The narrative also discusses that the selection of personal mobile devices will be a site-based decision to allow the leadership of the school to take particular school demographics into consideration. The narrative does not adequately discuss the plans or resource dedication to ensure that low-income families have the same 24/7/365 access as other families. Schools do provide computer kiosks in their lobbies for parental access to the portal that provides access to their student's data. Additionally, the narrative does provide strong information on other ways the district and community is working together to ensure that low-income families receive necessary services to include the work of the Title I and 21st Century Learning programs, high schools with programs for pregnant and parenting teens, ECE programs, and Family Resource Centers providing wrap-around services.

The district's narrative provides information on how the district will ensure adequate technical support to ensure that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support. This support includes a maintenance agreement with the contractor as well as online support tools in addition to district and school based support and training. An innovative solution to school-based support that also supports the district's personalized and deep learning reform plan is that students will be trained and deployed in the schools to provide tech support.

The application narrative discusses how all stakeholders will be able to access student data at various levels, but the application does not provide any information about the system's ability to allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems

The application provides sufficient evidence that its Data Warehouse will include all relevant data for analysis to include Human Resources, Student Nutrition, and student assessment and discipline data.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward goals and opportunities for corrections and improvements centers around the project's Project Coordinator, Data Analysts, and Internal Evaluation Team meeting regularly to examine results and make program adjustments as necessary. The Student Voice Toolkit is also an innovative strategy to ensure the student voice is heard in the continuous improvement process. Though the narrative does describe how results data will be monitored, measured, and publicly shared, and the timelines and parties responsible for doing so are clear, the language of the narrative does not speak in terms of sharing that information as it relates to the quality of investments funded by the grant in the various categories or strategies to include professional development, technology, or staff.

Overall, the activities to be undertaken in the continuous improvement process and the rationale for those activities are clear and appropriate to ensure responsiveness to the data and lessons learned as the proposal is implemented.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application narrative details a thorough suite of methods through which it communicates with its internal and external stakeholders to include a combination of electronic and face-to-face communication. A particular strength of the communications and engagement plan is the already-established annual Data Summit that involves a wide array of stakeholders and cements the district's public commitment to data use in decision-making.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For every required and selected measure, the applicant has set ambitious yet achievable performance measures with strong evidence of a sound rationale for both the selection of the measure and the setting of the targets. In addition, the narrative sets forth a thoughtful plan for how each measure will be examined for continuous improvement of that measure. Particularly strong is the district's work on indicators at various grade levels of Social/Emotional Development and its work with WestEd and CASEL to ensure the accuracy of the indicators. All selected measures successfully align with the applicant's reform proposal.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's plan to evaluate the effectiveness of RTTT-D funded activities in order to improve results is extremely thorough and impressive. The evaluation plans call for a comprehensive two-part (formative and summative) evaluation system. The formative evaluation will be focused on program fidelity, eliminating barriers, and sustainability and future scalability. The evaluation plan delineates the focus on each strategy and key hypothesis to ensure effective implementation of the reform proposal and acknowledges the probable need for adjustment of both the plan and the measures over time based on the learning from the evaluation and accompanying communications plan.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget narrative identifies the various sources of other funds (federal, state, local, and non-profit) that will support the project and affirms the commitment of state-level leaders to the district's reform efforts in the form of their letters of support. The application narrative thoroughly aligns and leverages these other funds in support of a comprehensive, cohesive reform vision and plan for the district.</p> <p>In general, the budget amounts are reasonable and sufficient to support the district's reform proposal. The alignment with other sources of funds is particularly strong and supports the sustainability of the reform efforts. Though there is no question about the necessity of strong leadership to implement reform and increase student achievement, the total cost of the contract with and travel to the University of Virginia for principal/leadership team training is surprisingly large. The narrative does, however, provide a sufficient rationale for the size of this investment.</p> <p>What is not clear from the budget and narrative is which funds will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs, which is a required element of the criterion. This results in a slight lessening of the overall score. .</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

As noted in the application narrative, it is rather extraordinary what the district has accomplished in terms of increases in student academic achievement and graduation rates in the face of significantly declining state and local funds for education in its state due to the recession.

The applicant's ability to leverage and align other sources of funds and to secure other grant and foundation funding bodes well for its future as funders are likely to support success efforts. The district, through its narrative, also demonstrates a history of strong fiscal management in streamlining centralized services and absorbing significant budget cuts.

Additionally, the grant states that the Governor has stated that there will not be additional cuts to education next year, and the economy of the state has made a demonstrated turn for the better.

Even without those positives, the district's reform proposal and planning have taken sustainability into account in numerous ways to include the trainer-of-trainer professional development model and front-loading the development of the Data Warehouse.

Overall, it is apparent that the district will be able to sustain the reforms it has already begun to put into place.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative details an exhaustive list of existing partnerships that help support students academically, socially, and behaviorally and align with the projects goals. However, the application does not propose additional partnerships. This is not a weakness of the proposal, but rather a strength.

The narrative provides a description of the numerous ongoing sustainable partnerships that it has formed with public and private organizations; student service providers; businesses, philanthropies, civic groups, and community-based organizations; early learning programs; and postsecondary institutions that will support the plan.

The narrative identifies more than 10 population-level results for students in the district that align with and support the applicant's Race to the Top – District proposal, though targets are not provided.

The narrative does not discuss how the district and its partners will track the selected indicators for participating students as it relates to their direct involvement in various community-based programs, but the narrative does thoroughly explain throughout the narrative how the various data elements will be collected and how the data will be used to target resources and inform improvement planning. The narrative also discusses the significant strength of sharing data with social service agencies to more efficiently track students.

The district's strategy to scale the partnership model to other communities largely involves communication of best practices and data demonstrating success. Trainings with the district and some partner agencies are also conducted jointly which allows for the further dissemination of the knowledge received in training.

The application narrative thoroughly describes how various partnerships integrate education and other services for students, including the homeless program and its partners and the SEL program and its partners. The district's partnerships detailed in the narrative are all strongly aligned with the educational reform agenda of the district.

The application provides a chart that adequately details how the district and its partners would build capacity by a process of ongoing assessment of the needs and assets of students and the school, establish a decision-making process, engage parents and families, and assess progress.

Overall, the application thoroughly describes its extensive work to establish meaningful partnerships with various supporting players and entities and notes the alignment of the goals of these partnerships with the goals of the district's reform proposal.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<div>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The application clearly and thorough meets Absolutely Priority 1. Throughout the application narrative, the district coherently and comprehensively addresses how it has been and will continue to create personalized learning environments designed to significantly improve learning and teaching. The application details the tools, resources, trainings, and oversight the district will employ to support full implementation of its proposal to deepen the learning of all participating students and the effectiveness of teachers and leaders. The narrative describes the multiple but unified strategies the district will use to continue to reduce acheivement gaps and increase graduation rates.</div>		
Total	210	172